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Shaffer, Chauncey.

Reasons for voting for John C. Fremont.

New York, 1856.



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# CHAUNCEY SHAFFER'S REASONS

For Voting for JOHN C. FREMONT. . 158

SARATOGA SPRINGS, Aug. 14, 1856. 581

U. DUNN, Esq.—My Dear Sir: I have just received, by way of New-York City, your note of the 9th inst., inclosing the following extract from *The Ithica Citizen*, to wit:

"COMING BACK.—Chauncey Shaffer, who was one of the most prominent bolters from the Philadelphia American Convention, and who has been stumping the river counties in this State at the Fremont meetings, has returned to the hearty support of Fillmore and Donelson. Mr. Shaffer is an eloquent speaker, and was District Attorney in New-York City. He belongs to the Methodist Church, and his recent conviction that Mr. Fremont is a Roman Catholic, is the reason why he withdraws his support from the Republicans. He has candidly examined all the evidence, for and against, which has appeared, and has looked closely into the statements of Fulmer, and the opposition against them, and declares that the evidence in favor of his being a Papist is conclusive, for which reason he cannot support him."

You assure me that the above is producing an impression in your region, and desire me to inform you whether it is true or not. I answer that is a sheer fabrication—a "Roorback." That no further mischief may occur from the circulation of that article, I will set the matter of my preference of candidates right at once.

In the first place, I was not a prominent or other "bolter from the Philadelphia American Convention." I was not a delegate to that Convention. There were reasons why I should not be a delegate. I had too much to do with undoing the work of a previous Council in Philadelphia assembled; too much to do against the slave propagandists at Binghamton last August, and was too little inclined to see Americanism sold out, to be considered a safe man to go to Philadelphia.

I staid at home against my will, I admit. Moreover, that Convention was not an American Convention.

As far as the North was concerned, it was a Silver Gray Whig Convention; as far as the South was concerned, it was a Convention for the Propagation of Human Slavery, and the result was the nomination of two men, one of whom glories in being the owner of a hundred slaves; and the other (Mr. Fillmore) in being a most subservient instrument of the Slave Power, as is manifestly proved by his course while acting as President of the United States; also by his speeches made during his Southern tour in pursuit of a re-nomination, as well as by his nullification speeches at Albany and elsewhere, on his return from his visit to the Pope.

Hence the leading Silver Gray newspapers of the North (including *The New York Express*) claim Mr. Fillmore as the regular Whig nominee for the Presidency, while the South claim

him as the champion of *Southern rights*, (meaning the extension of human Slavery by the action of the General Government,) while Mr. Fillmore, to justify the claims of the South, in effect says, "Elect me, or the South, that loves me so well, shall not remain in the Union."

As an American, I am not bound by the action of that Convention ; rather, let me say, I cannot submit to be bound by its action, any more than can my brethren of Massachusetts, of Connecticut, and of every New England State. The American party of Massachusetts, in solemn council assembled, has declared for Mr. Fremont, and nominated electors favorable to his election , and so has the State of Connecticut, and so will all New England do, (for New England has a history,) and so will the American party of this State act ; excepting always a portion of the Silver Gray portion of that party. The latter portion will stand by Mr. Fillmore, notwithstanding he "*has adopted the leading principles of that platform*," *the seventh section of which commits the American party to Slavery extension under the guise of squatter sovereignty* ; because this "portion of a portion" came into the order with the design of retrieving the fallen fortunes of Mr. Fillmore, as is proved by the attempted ostracism of the liberal-minded men of the order, and by the threats preceding and accompanying the Philadelphia Convention, that in the event of George Law's receiving the nomination for the Presidency, they, with the Whig party proper, would nominate an out-and-out American Whig, (meaning Mr. Fillmore, I presume,) and also by letters now in existence, and which, I hope, will yet be published.

I have not "returned to the hearty support of Fillmore and Donelson," nor will I do any act or thing tending to sanction the outrages of Pro-Slavery, Nullification Border Ruffians, who in addition to their outrages in Missouri and Kansas, of themselves sufficient to turn the cheek of darkness pale, have, from 1852 until now, wrested the high powers of the nation from their legitimate purpose, to the strengthening of the Slave Oligarchy.

There are other objections to my supporting Mr. Fillmore, founded upon the fact stated by the *Citizen*, that *I belong to the Methodist Church*.

The church owes Slavery no particular good-will, for Slavery has rent that church in twain ; has imprisoned women for teaching the slave to read the Bible, and has sought in every way to destroy that church, as being the opponent of Slavery most to be feared. Let facts speak. Last winter, a minister of the Methodist Church, in Missouri, was arrested while in the pulpit by a gang of men, (who, if they live, will probably vote for Mr. Fillmore), who wantonly and falsely charged him with horse-stealing ; and, without allowing him time to put on his overcoat, mounted him on a horse, drove him some seventeen miles (the weather being intensely cold), threw him into a cheerless room, without fire, there left him to die, *and there he died !*

My informant is a Bishop of the Methodist Church, and spoke of his own knowledge.

Another instance. The Rev. Mr. Wiley, and about thirty other ministers of the Methodist Church have been assaulted in their churches and driven from place to place, like beasts of prey, their lives being every day in imminent peril.

Another instance. In Kansas, a Methodist minister was whipped, tarred and feathered, tied to a log and set afloat on the Missouri River.

Another instance. Very recently a Methodist minister in Missouri, while preaching, was dragged from his pulpit and tarred and feathered, while, an old Methodist layman, for the crime of expostulation against such conduct was shot; and it is a notorious fact, and one which will not admit of controversy, that a minister of my church cannot preach the Gospel in the State of Missouri, or the Territory of Kansas, but at the peril of his life! and yet I find no reproof of these outrages either in the Philadelphia platform or in any of the speeches of Mr. Fillmore.

As to my having examined "all the evidence" in relation to Mr. Fremont's religious creed, I have to say, that I have examined all the evidence, including Alderman Fulmer's statement, and have exhausted the means of information within my reach, and have arrived at the following conclusions:

1st. That Mr. Fremont's father was a French Huguenot, and his mother an American Protestant lady.

2d. That Col. Fremont was born a Protestant, baptized a Protestant, married a Protestant lady, had his children baptized by a Protestant clergyman, educates them in the Protestant faith, while he is a Protestant in practice in all the relations of life.

I admit that he was married by a Catholic clergyman, under circumstances peculiar to himself, and with which the public is already acquainted.

3d. I conclude that Alderman Fulmer's statement is altogether untrue. Col. Fremont was not in Washington at the time Fulmer says he conversed with him, nor within several months of that time. He was on the Pacific Ocean, or the Isthmus of Darien, or on the steamer George Law, from Aspinwall to New-York City, at the time fixed by Fulmer.

I should add, that upon Col. Fremont's arrival in New-York City, he sailed to Europe without visiting Washington at all, and that he remained in Europe more than a year.

I should further add, that the conviction in my mind, that Alderman Fulmer has borne false witness against his neighbor, is strengthened by the contradictory statements that I am credibly informed he has made concerning this pretended conversation, and by the further fact that among his immediate neighbors his statement is not believed.

*But if I should refuse to vote for Mr. Fremont because of his being a Roman Catholic, I could not vote for Mr. Fillmore, and for the reason that the Convention which nominated Mr. Fillmore was controlled by Roman Catholics as well as by Slavery Propagandists. This is the proof:*

Two sets of delegates appeared from the State of Louisiana

—one Protestant and the other Roman Catholic—both demanding admission. The Roman Catholic delegation was received, and the Protestant delegation was rejected.

The reason, I understand, assigned for this singular admission and rejection was, that the Roman Catholic delegation did not acknowledge the temporal supremacy of the Pope ; but did the Protestant delegation acknowledge the temporal supremacy of the Pope ?

There are other objections to my supporting Mr. Fillmore, and as an American, and a man who, at the commencement of his political life, resolutely set his face against the further aggressions of the Slave Power, I cannot be induced by any special pleading, or by any "Roarbacks" that may be hatched in the hot-bed of political zeal, to vote for any other man for President than Col. Fremont, inasmuch as I see no other way of putting an end to the terrible aggressions of the Slave Power.

*I believe upon the election or defeat of Col. FREMONT will depend the questions, whether or not the black column of SLAVERY will be pushed to the PACIFIC OCEAN ; whether or not the AFRICAN-SLAVE-TRADE, the sum of all wickedness, will be revived ; and whether or not practical SLAVERY shall be forced into the FREE STATES under decisions of FEDERAL JUDGES, appointed as MR. FILLMORE sought to appoint and did appoint some of his JUDGES ; and, in short, whether this country shall have a Constitutional Government for the SLAVE OLIGARCHY ; whether or not we shall recover our lost national honor, and go on in peaceful progress to the climax of HUMAN GREATNESS ; or whether we shall be destroyed by the aggressive system of the SLAVE POWER.*

Very truly yours, CHAUNCEY SHAFFER.

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